DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 329 EA 017 786

AUTHOR Clayton, W. Donald; Wilson, Edward S.
TITLE Nonreturning First Year Teachers: A Profile.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (9th, Orlando, FL, November 16-20, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Faculty Mobility; Influences; Labor Turnover; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Orientation; *Teacher Persistence; Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS Alabama

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the causes of first year teacher attrition and compile a profile of first year teacher drop-outs. Of 138 beginning teachers who returned a questionnaire concerning their reasons for not returning to their first-year teaching positions in Alabama's public elementary and secondary schools, 47.2 percent left the profession entirely (43.1 percent for personal reasons and 56.9 percent for job-related reasons) and the remaining 52.8 percent changed school systems (38.5 percent for personal reasons and 61.5 percent for job-related reasons). Among both groups, those reporting personal reasons for leaving their positions reported having better relationships with their colleagues and supervisors than did those reporting job-related reasons for leaving. Relocation due to marriage was the major personal reason given for changing systems, having children the major personal reason for leaving education, and being dismissed the major job-related reason for both changing systems and leaving education. Colleagues were identified as those most understanding of first-year teachers' problems. Satisfactory orientation experiences were reported by 52 percent of the first-year teachers who changed systems, but by only 40 percent of those who left education. (PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED258329

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Don Clayton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

NONRETURNING FIRST YEAR TEACHERS: A PROFILE

Dr. W. Donald Clayton
Associate Professor
College of Education
University of Montevallo
(Alabama)

Dr. Edward S. Wilson
Associate Professor
College of Education
University of Montevallo
(Alabama)

Paper presented at the Ninth Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education, held in Orlando, Florida, November 16-20, 1984.

EA 017 786

Introduction:

It has been reported (Lagana, 1970 and Ryan, 1970) that over 50 percent of all beginning teachers leave the teaching profession within two years. Clayton, (1976) found that 25 percent of all beginning teachers vacated their initial teaching position following their first year. This pattern of beginning teacher attrition has remained stable for over a decade, yet the literature reveals little to aid in our understanding of this problem. "When the amount of time, energy, and expense given to the preparation of teachers is considered, the question of teacher attrition, particularly first year teacher attrition, becomes an exceedingly important one", (Clayton, 1976 p. 1). The responsibility for the success and/or failure of first year teaching, rests upon all levels of the educational system. Teacher educators, superintendents, supervisors, principals, counselors, and experienced teachers all have an opportunity to enhance the probability of success of first year teachers (FYT).

The purpose of this study is to: (1) identify the causes of FYT attrition and (2) compile a profile of FYT drop-outs.

Subjects:

The subjects utilized in this study included 449 non-returning first-year teachers from elementary and secondary public schools in Alabama during the 1980-81 school year. The subjects were identified through the assistance of the

Alabama State Department of Education and the 127 city and county public school systems. The nonreturning FYT's employed in this study comprised 20.9 percent of all FYT's during the 1980-81 school year.

Tables 1 and 2 describe the subjects' sex and age, respectively. There were 73.2 percent females and 26.8 percent males in the sample. Table 2 indicates that the majority of the subjects were 35 years of age or younger.

Table 1

Sex of Subjects Who Left Education or Changed School Systems After Their Initial Year of Employment

	Number	Percent
Males	37	26.8
Females	101	73.2
Total	138	100.0

Table 2

Age of Subjects Who Left Education or Changed School Systems After Their Initial Year of Employment

	Number	Percent
25 and under	67	48.5
26-35	50	36.2
36-45	12	8.7
46 and over	9	6.6
Total	138	100.0

Methodology:

Each of the 127 superintendents in the state of Alabama was contacted in order to identify the nonreturning FYT's. Nonreturning FYT's identified from the superintendents' responses constituted the subjects in the sample group.

A questionnaire developed by the researchers was mailed to 449 subjects. A second mailing followed the initial contact within four weeks. A total of 41 (9.1%) of the questionnaires were returned to the researchers as "not deliverable". Of the 408 nonreturning FYT's contacted, 138 (43.1%) participated in the study.

Instrumentation:

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers to elicit information regarding the factors involved in FYT professional employment decisions. This instrument is the product of earlier research employed by Clayton (1976), Lagana (1970), Ryan (1970), and Southwell (1970).

Findings:

The study identified two major categories of non-returning FYT's: (1) those who changed school systems after their initial year of employment, and (2) those who left the field of education after their initial year of employment. Of the 138 nonreturning FYT's, 52.8 percent remained in some educational employment setting for the 1981-82 school year. Conversely, 47.2 percent of nonreturning FYT's were

either unemployed or employed outside of the field of education during the 1981-82 school year. Table 3 contains a breakdown of the present employment status of the nonreturning FYT's.

Table 3

1981-82 Employment Status of 1980-81 First Year Teachers

	Number	Percent
Teacher	64	46.3
Other Education	9	6.5
Student	4	2.9
Unemployed	32	23.2
Outside Education	29	21.1
Total	138	100.0

Nonreturning FYT's indentified fourteen separate reasons for either leaving education or changing employment within an educational setting. Examination of Table 4 reveals two distinct categories cited by the subjects. Reasons for leaving education or changing school systems could be separated into a personal or job-related category. Job-related reasons were cited more frequently than personal reasons by both employment categories. Of the six personal reasons indicated by nonreturning FYT's, child rearing and marriage accounted for one half of all responses. Administative problems and

termination of contract accounted for approxprimately 60 percent of all job-related responses.

Table 4

Reasons Given By 1980-81 First Year Teachers For Leaving Education or Changing School Systems After Their Initial Year of Employment

	Changed Sch. Sys.		Left Educ.	
	Number	Percent	Num.	Per.
Too Far From Residence	4	5.5	1	1.5
Marriage (Relocation)	11	15.1	4	6.2
Residential Locale	4	5.5	0	0.0
Spouse Transferred	7	9.6	2	3.1
Children	1	1.4	13	20.0
Other (Personal)	1	1.4	8	12.3
Total	28	38.5	28	43.1
Administrative Prob.	8	10.9	5	7.7
Out of Field	2	2.7	1	1.5
Contract not Renewed	13	17.8	23	35.4
Inadequate Salary	5	6.8	4	6.2
Discipline Problems	3	4.1	2	3.1
Inadequate Teaching Facilities	1	1.4	0	0.0
Poor Teaching Position	4	5.5	1	1.5
Other (Job-Related)	9	12.3	1	1.5
Total	45	61.5	37	56.9

Tables 5 and 6 contain the number and percent of non-returning FYT's with regard to the perceived quality of their relationships with both teachers and administrators. Table 5 is comprised of those FYT's who left the field of education after one year. As reported in Table 5, those subjects reporting personal reasons for leaving education seemed to enjoy good relationships with their colleagues as well

as their administrators. However, those subjects listing job-related reasons for leaving education indicated a higher percentage of poor relationships with both teachers and administrators. Nonreturning FYT's who listed job-related reasons were much more likely to have negative feelings toward their administrator.

Table 5

Reasons For Leaving Education After The Initial Year of Employment Categorized By Perceived Relationships With Colleagues and Administrators

Personal Reasons	Teacher Relationship Good No.	Pct.	Bad No.	Pct.	Admn. Relationship Good No.	Pct.	Bad No.	Pct.
Too Far From Residence	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Marrige	3	75.0	1	25.0	3	75.0	1	25.0
Residential Locale	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Spouse Transferred	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0
Children	12	92.3	1	7.7	12	92.3	1	7.7
Other	8	100.0	0	0.0	7	87.5	1	12.5
Total	26		2		25		3	
Job-Related Reasons								
Administrative Problems	3	60.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	5	100.0
Out of Field	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Contract Not Renewed	19	82.6	4	17.4	14	60.9	9	39.1
Inadequated Salary	4	100.0	0	0.0	3	75.0	1	25.0
Discipline Problems	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Poor Teaching Position	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Inadequate Teaching Facilities	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Total	31		6		19		18	

Table 6 is comprised of those FYT's who changed school systems after one year. Table 6 reveals those subjects who reported personal reasons for changing their employment setting within the field of education tended to enjoy good relationships with both their colleagues and their administators. On the other hand, those subjects indicating job-related reasons for changing their employment setting within the field of education seemed unable to relate as well with their colleagues and their administrators.

Table 6

Reasons For Changing School Systems After The Initial Year of Employment Categorized By Perceived Relationships With Colleagues and Administrators

Personal Reasons	Teacher Relationship Good No.	Pct.	Bad No.	Pct.	Admn. Relationship Good No.	Pct.	Bad No.	Pct.
Too Far From Residence	4	100.0	0	0.0	3	75.0	1	25.0
Marriage	10	90.9	1	9.1	9	81.8	2	18.2
Residential Locale	2	50.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	2	50.0
Spouse Transferred	7	100.0	0	0.0	7	100.0	0	0.0
Children	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Other	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Total	25		3		23		5	
Job-Related Reasons								
Administrative Problems	6	75.0	2	25.0	1	12.5	7	87.5
Out of Field	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	100.0	0	0.0
Contract Not Renewed	12	92.3	1	7.7	8	61.5	5	38.5
Inadequate Salary	5	100.0	0	0.0	5	100.0	0	0.0
Discipline Problems	2	66.7	1	33.3	3	100.0	0	0.0
Poor Teaching Position	3	75.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	3	75.0
Inadequate Teaching Facilities	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
Other	9	100.0	0	0.0	9	100.0	0	0.0
Total	40		5		30		15	

Table 7 contains the number and percent of nonreturning FYT's with regard to the individual identified as being the most understanding of their problems. Examination of Table 7 reveals little difference in responses among those teachers who changed school systems after their initial year of employment and those who left the field of education after their first year. It seems apparent from the responses of nonreturning FYT's that the persons most frequently identified as understanding of their problems were their colleagues. When teacher in area and teacher outside area responses were combined, both categories of respondents identified their colleagues as being most understanding 62 percent of the time. It should also be noted that the number of respondents listing their principal as most understanding of their problems was second only to those who listed colleagues within their teaching area.

Table 7

Person Most Understanding of My Problems Given By Those Individuals Who Either Changed School Systems Or Left The Field of Education After Their Initial Year of Employment

	Changed Sch. Sys.		Left Educ.	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principal	18	24.7	18	27.7
Teacher In Area	35	47.9	31	47.7
Teacher Outside Area	10	13.7	9	13.8
Secretary	2	2.7	2	3.1
Counselor	0	0.0	1	1.5
Assistant Principal	3	4.1	2	3.1
Other	5	6.9	2	3.1
Total	73	100.0	65	100.0

Table 8 contains the number and percent of nonreturning FYT's evaluation of their teacher orientation experience. Examination of Table 8 reveals that 52.1 percent of those nonreturning FYT's who changed school systems after their initial year of employment reported a satisfactory orientation experience. Conversely, 60 percent of those nonreturning FYT's who left the field of education after their initial year of employment reported either an unsatisfactory or nonexistant orientation experience.

Table 8

Perception of First-Year Teacher Orientation By Those Individuals Who Either Changed School Systems or Left The Field of Education After Their Initial Year of Employment

	Changed Sch. Sys.		Left Educ.	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Satisfactory	38	52.1	26	40.0
Unsatisfactory	18	24.6	12	18.5
Nonexistent	17	23.3	27	41.5
Total	73	100.0	65	100.0

Summary and Conclusion:

Nonreturning FYT's can be classified into two major groups: 1) those who changed school systems after their initial year of employment and 2) those who left the field of education after their initial year of employment.

Reasons listed by respondents ranged from the school being too far from their residence to inadequate teaching facilities. Most frequently cited reasons for those non-returning FYT's who switched school systems included: 1) Marriage (relocation) and 2) dismissal. Those nonreturning FYT's who left the field of education, did so because they; 1) had children and 2) were dismissed.

Nonreturning FYT's generally reported good relationships with both their colleagues as well as their administrator. There were a number of respondents, however, who expressed negative feelings toward administrators, especially those FYT's who listed job-related reasons for leaving their initial teaching position.

Persons identified as most understanding, by the non-returning FYT's were most often colleagues within their teaching area. Other groups listed as most understanding included administrators and teachers outside of their grade level or subject area.

Over 53 percent of all nonreturning FYT's in the study, described their orientation experience as unsatisfactory or non-existent, Of those nonreturning FYT's who left the field of education after their initial year of employment 60 percent expressed either negative attitudes toward their orientation or stated that they had no orientation program.

It would seem that a comprehensive orientation program for FYT's would enhance their probability of success in the field

of education. Although a comprehensive orientation program would not resolve all of the problems encountered by the FYT's, it would promote an atmosphere of growth and development within each school.

References

Clayton, W.D. A follow-up study of nonreturning first-year teachers in the state of Alabama. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn Universtiy, 1976.

Lagana, J. F. GT report. Grade Teacher, 1970, 88, 8-12.

Ryan K. Don't smile until Christmas. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Southwell, John L. Teacher aids teacher. The Clearing House, 1970, 45, 104-106.